$8.5-Million Sought From Army in 1953 Drug Death

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By JOSEPH P. TREASTER

A New York woman announced yesterday that she had filed a claim against the Army for $8.5-million for the "wrongful death" of her father, Harold Blauer, in an experiment with a hallucinogenic drug 22 years ago.

The woman, Elizabeth Barrett, also made public a formerly secret document giving her father's reactions to the tests, which she said recalled Nazi Germany.

In a news conference, she said that her father not only had not given his consent to take the drug administered under Army contract at the New York State Psychiatric Institute here but also that "he did not want to take the drug and it seemed to me from the records that he was forced to take it." She said her father, a 42-year-old professional tennis player, was "terrified" by the experiments and that "he was afraid the drug was making him lose his mind."

In another development, a member of Senator Edward M. Kennedy's staff in Washington said that Mr. Kennedy had scheduled hearings next Wednesday and Thursday on the experiments on humans with drugs that the Department of Defense has been conducting for at least the last 20 years.

The aide said that the hearings would focus on experiments on more than 4,000 persons with drugs that can cause hallucinations. The hearings will not be limited to that area, the aide said.

Until the disclosure by Pentagon officials of Mr. Blauer's death on Aug. 12, the Army had said that it knew of no deaths or bad reactions from the drug experiments it had conducted or financed.

Miss Barrett, a 35-year-old widow, said yesterday that in a meeting last Thursday with Army officials she learned that on the same day her father died at the New York State Psychiatric Institute, Jan. 8, 1953, another patient was given the same drug. She said that the other patient had also suffered a negative reaction, but had recovered.

A Defense Department official said that the second incident —which had not previously been reported — involved a 21-year-old woman. The official would not reveal her name.

The Army has said that Mr. Blauer was given various derivatives of mescaline in five injections, but Miss Barrett says her mother told her after the death that her father had been given LSD.

Miss Barrett uses her middle name rather than that of her husband or father, and does not use the honorific Mrs.

She said that the document describing the tests given her father recalled to her Nazi Germany, which experimented on prisoners in concentration camps.

Dr. Sidney Malitz, the director of the institute, at 722 W. 168th Street, has said he believed that all 100 patients in the experiments done under Army contract had given their permission, but a Defense Department spokesman said he had been unable to find any documents that indicated Mr. Blauer had done so.

The Army has said it discovered records on the Blauer case during an investigation on its drug experiment program prompted in part by allegations of personal drug misuse against the head of the program.

Representative Thomas J. Downey, Democrat of Long Island, has charged that contrary to the Army's statement, the records on the death were read by an Army officer at least twice—in 1959 and 1967—and that there was an apparently deliberate effort to keep the information from the public.

Mr. Downey, has maintained that the records were not "discovered," but that the secretary for the head of the Army's drug program had produced them from a walk-in vault the day after the Representative visited the Edgewood Arsenal, in Maryland, where most of the Army tests were conducted. The Representative made the visit as part of a personal investigation.

The inquiry into the Army's experiments came after the Rockefeller Commission, which was established to investigate allered illegal domestic activities of the Central Intelligence Agency, disclosed that an unwitting subject in an agency experiment with LSD had plunged to his death from a 10th floor New York hotel window in 1953.

The family of the victim, Frank R. Olson, has announced intentions to sue the C.I.A., and for several weeks lawyers for the family have been consulting with Government attorneys.

The New York Times

Elizabeth Barrett at news conference here yesterday.

Miss Barrett's mother sued the State of New York for $275,000 in connection with Mr. Blauer's death and in 1955 received a court award of $18,000. The Army's involvement was not known however.

Pentagon Disputed

The Pentagon, in disclosing Mr. Blauer's death, had said that the first four tests on him "produced mild or no effects on the patient." But the eight-page document that Miss Barrett made public yesterday indicated that her father, who had admitted himself to the institute suffering from depression and tension after having been divorced, appeared to have been extremely upset in the last three of the experiments.

Apparently before the first injection was given, Mr. Blauer was described in the document, which was declassified last Aug. 28, as "very apprehensive, considerable persuasion required." Referring to the second injection the report says Mr. Blauer "slept bad last night—knew drug was coming."

In the third test, the document said, Mr. Blauer indicated at 9:47 A.M., as the drug was being given, "everything is shaking and hazy." At 10.15 A.M. what were described as initial "vibrations" had eased, but the document reported, "The vibrations were terrifying, felt as if he could go out of mind. The reason he didn't was that doctor gave injection slowly."

A nurse noted, according to the document, that Mr. Blauer had been restless and asked, "Why do you do this? I have plans to go home tomorrow."

In the fourth test, Mr. Blauer was given 695 milligrams, about twice the largest previous amount. All day and into the next morning he was described as hallucinating, having "violent tremors" and unable to control his limbs, was dry in the mouth, looked depressed and "complained of headache, and of something pulling inside his head."

Reporting on the last test, the document mentions "restless movements, protesting injection." Within six minutes, Mr. Blauer's teeth were clinched, it said, and he was frothing at the mouth, his eyes rapidly oscillating. He lapsed into a coma 73 minutes later.

After 43 minutes artificial respiration was begun and adrenalin injected, as the pulse, respiration and blood pressure dropped. At 12:15 P.M., less than two and a half hours after the drug had been given, Mr. Blauer was pronounced dead.